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SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

ASSOCIATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, ONTARIO, HAMILTON BRANCH

SUBMISSION BY ITS COMMUNITY STUDY AND ACITON COMMITTEE TO: JACK SOUTHALL, COMMISSIONER, REGIONAL SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

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ASSOCIATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, ONTARIO
HAMILTON BRANCH

SUBMISSION
BY ITS COMMUNITY STUDY AND ACTION COMMITTEE

TO:

JACK SOUTHALL, Commissioner
Regional Social Services Committee

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INTRODUCTION

As early childhood educators, we are aware that quality day care, particularly for infants, is very difficult to achieve and maintain. Unfortunately, many existing facilities are inadequate. This is true within licensed centres as well as in private homes. The primary objective of our Association, and this committee in particular, is to work towards the improvement of existing facilities and to eliminate any facilities which do not provide adequately for childrens' needs. We would support any effort from local government to help us achieve this goal and have, in fact, worked specifically towards establishing guidelines and providing a network for upgrading standards within our own organization.

Nevertheless, we strongly oppose any attempt to completely eliminate any alternatives, simply on the basis of cost; we feel particularly concerned about this because the current proposal could conceivably result in less adequate care for the infants within our community who are unable to speak for themselves.

Therefore, in this the International Year of the Child, we have prepared this brief in order to speak for the rights of the child as expressed in the International Year of the Child Bill of Rights. (Bill of Rights statement which is appropriate).

In this presentation when we refer to a day care centre or private home day care we are using the definitions provided in the Day Nurseries Act i.e. a day care centre is a licensed establishment for the group care of children and must meet standards as set out by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Home day care is provided in a private home by an individual essentially untrained in early childhood development but supervised by the social services department personnel. An infant is a child from birth to 18 months.

In our opinion there are many regulations in the D.N.A. which affect the quality of care given in each facility, such as.

DAY CARE CENTRE	P. H. D. C.
Many requirements regarding premises such as; Fenced outdoor area suitable for sleeping and playing (D.N.A. page 21, 4 (a)(i)).	No requirement stated (therefore high-rise apartments could and are used).
Adequate space according to regulations (30 sq.ft. inside and 60 outside, excluding toileting,storage and food preparation), for play, toilet, washing, dressing, eating, resting, storage, food preparation etc. (D.N.A. page 18, 3(a)(o)).	No requirement stated.
Many requirements regarding equipment and furnishings such as child	no requirement stated.

DAY CARE CENTRE	P. H. D. C.
size furniture, play materials etc. (D.N.A. 5(1)(a)-(k)).	
Specific requirements pertaining to infant facilities, eg. a crib for each child's own use. (D.N.A. 5(2)(a) (i)-(iii)).	No requirement stated.
Specific requirements regarding maintenance e.g. lighting, cleaning, ventilation, etc. (D.N.A.6 (a)-(d)).	No requirement stated.
Records must be maintained and available for inspection at all times e.g. particulars of nutrition, growth and health. (D.N.A.7 (2)(a)-(m)).	No requirement stated.
A daily program must be planned and conducted according to specific requirements e.g. time spent out-doors, (D.N.A.8(1)-(3)(a)-(g)).	No requirement stated.
N.B. Corporal punishment is not permitted (D.N.A.8(3)(f)). See research attached.	No reference to corporal punishment.
Specific requirements for infant nutrition (D.N.A.9-1(a)).	No requirement stated.
Specific requirements for health and medical supervision (D.N.A.10, 10a).	No specific requirements (D.N.A.15 e(2)(d)(viii)).

DAY CARE CENTRE	P. H. D. C.
Specific requirements regarding fire and emergency procedures and records of same. (D.N.A.11 (a)-(c)).	No specific requirement.
Specialized knowledge required by staff members supervising children. (D.N.A.12(1)(b)).[2]	Adequate knowledge only is required. (D.N.A.15 d(2) (d)(vii)b).
A staff ratio of 3:1 is required for infant care (D.N.A. schedule 1)	Provider may have 5 children, two of whom may be infants. (D.N.A.15-d(2)(d)(ii)).
There must be at least two adults in attendance for four or more children. (D.N.A.12(4)).	Only one adult (and not necessarily the approved provider) must be in attendance (for these children). (D.N.A.2(d)(vi)).
Specific requirements for keeping adequate financial records. (D.N.A.13(1)(2)(3)(4)).	No requirements for financial records.
In this locality, provincial policy is administered so that the person in charge must be trained in early childhood education to the diploma or degree level.[2]	No minimal training requirement for home care provider. However, we note that there are several well qualified providers in this area.
Licensed and known to the public	

SUMMARY

In summary, although we are sympathetic to the need to save dollars in this time of fiscal constraints, we are concerned about the possibility of sacrificing quality day care as an economy measure. We feel that children and families both have unique needs, they should be provided with a variety of alternatives from which to choose.

We were distressed by the fact that no prior notification of this proposed action was given to any of those people who would be affected by it. The experts and professionals in this field, The Association of Early Childhood Education, Ontario, Hamilton Branch, the parents and the centre operators, were not consulted. This oversight makes us question the motives behind this action.

In the light of the increased incidence of child neglect and abuse in our society we contend that there is less risk of children in licence centers being subjected to such abuse. Fellow staff members are aware of critical situations and are supportive of one another in finding appropriate techniques for dealing with difficult children. In the isolation of her home the P.H.D.C. provider does not have the immediate support system that is available in a Day Care facility.(See Research).

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that,

1.) the Hamilton-Wentworth Region continues to subsidize the care of needy infants in day care centres which provide a high quality of infant care.

2.) the Regional Social Services permit Parents to exercise their right to choose whether they wish to place their Infant in Private Home Day Care or a licenced Center.

3.) all day care centres and private home day care providers be closely monitored by the Hamilton-Wentworth Social Services personnel, and where they are not satisfied with the quality of care on any parameter, subsidized children should be removed.

4.) only fully trained (holding a diploma or degree in early childhood education or a recognized equivalent) private home day care providers be accepted by the Hamilton-Wentworth Region to give developmental care to subsidized children.

5.) the Hamilton-Wentworth Region encourage the establishment of more high quality infant care centres.

6.) the Hamilton-Wentworth Region cease to rely on the Ministry of Community and Social Services to maintain minimal standards, but develop their own standards whose minimal level should exceed those of the ministry. (The ministry must consider isolated areas when establishing standards

6.) cont'd.

which all can meet.)

7.) In this International Year of the Child, instead of cut backs, The Association of Early Childhood Education, Ontario Hamilton Branch and The Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Social Services, join forces to provide more services not less, for children, e.g., work shops, Seminars, etc.

Only then can the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Social Services be proud of the care they provide for needy children, and the Hamilton-Wentworth taxpayers be satisfied with the way such tax dollars are spent.

APPENDIX 1

United Nations Declaration of THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

1.	Right to	affection, love and understanding
2.	" "	adequate nutrition and medical care
3.	" "	protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation
4.	" "	free education and to full opportunity for play and recreation
5.	" "	a name and nationality
6.	" "	special care, if handicapped
7.	" "	be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster.
8.	" "	learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities
9.	" "	be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood
10.	" "	enjoy these rights regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or social origin

APPENDIX 2

Notes & Guidelines of Qualifications

Families seeking day care services for infants under 18 months of age are at a distinct disadvantage in the Hamilton-Wentworth Region. There are only four licensed infant care centres in operation and the quality of care is not the same in each centre. The most important aspect of quality is the calibre of the care given, it is admittedly no different than the inconsistent quality of care given by mothers with their own children. Since we are providing care outside of the home, it seems only fair that there be some guarantee of quality.

In the case of group care, there are many ways available to ensure high quality care. One of these is to insist that all care givers be fully trained in child development and early childhood developmental programming.

Using the local training institution as an example, the graduates of the two year Early Childhood Education Program at Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology have taken:

- a rigorous course in child development, emphasizing the early years.
- two courses in programming (including methods and techniques for guiding, motivating and stimulating young children) and curriculum for such programs.
- two courses pertaining to exceptional

children (their psychology and methods and techniques for working with them).

- a course in infant care which emphasizes group care, and programming specifically for infants and toddlers.
- A COURSE IN WORKING WITH PARENTS IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THE CHILD'S FAMILY LIFE.
- a course in nutrition, and one in health and first aid as well as many other courses of study.

There are in addition, twenty other community colleges and five universities in Ontario offering this kind of education and training. Those people who have undergone such theoretical and practical training are able to detect problems of a sensory or developmental nature, if they are present in the children for whom they provide care. They can plan suitable activities within the curriculum of their program to enhance growth and learning for all of the children. They can plan prescriptive programs for those who need them, and individual programs for handicapped children. They can maintain records based on observations of children, and report to parents and/or other professionals concerned about ongoing progress. They can plan programs for parents according to identified needs and involve parents in the program at differing levels and in differing ways.

Not all early childhood educators do these things with the same level of skill. It is more likely that they will be done,

and that staff will be accountable to themselves and others in group care, than in a private home where one untrained person is caring for children.

We see high quality care as having great potential as a preventive measure in health (both physical and mental) and education. It is a well known fact that remediation or cure is more costly than prevention in any field. Are we saving dollars now, by using the cheapest care, only to spend many times what we have saved in the future for medical care, remedial education, detention centres, court expenses, etc.?

MEMBERS

OF

THE COMMUNITY STUDY AND ACTION COMMITTEE

E.M. JOAN ASPIN	Early Childhood Educator, Business Administrator, currently operator of a Children's Centre
DOROTHY GORDON	Early Childhood Education Instructor, Mohawk College
MARY LOU DINGLE	Lawyer
PAT HILEMAN	Kindergarten Teacher
DOREEN DAVIES	Early Childhood Educator
ELAINE WRIGHT	Early Childhood Educator
MARILYN MISCIONE	Registered Nurse
MARY TITUS	Director of Education for Early Childhood Education, Mohawk College
GWYNNETH COOK	Early Childhood Educator, Head Teacher, East End Family Life Centre

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